

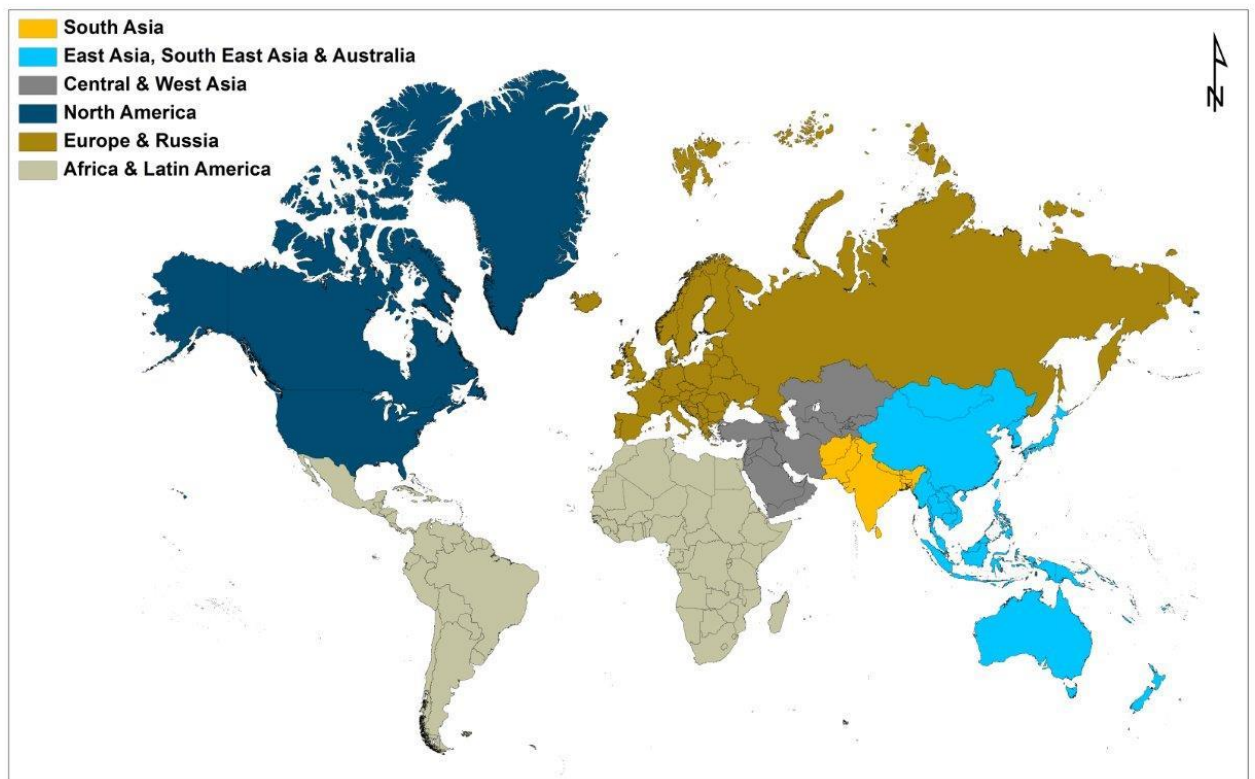


# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume V, Issue 6 | February 5, 2021

Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

## DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH Volume V, Issue 6

### ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is among India's oldest think tanks with its primary focus on strategic and international issues of critical national interest. DPG is a non-partisan institution and is independently funded by a non-profit Trust. Over past decades, DPG has established itself in both domestic and international circles and is widely recognised today among the top security think tanks of India and of Asia's major powers.

Since 2016, in keeping with India's increasing global profile, DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India's regional and global role and its policies in the Indo-Pacific. In a realist environment, DPG remains mindful of the need to align India's ambitions with matching strategies and capabilities, from diplomatic initiatives to security policy and military modernisation.

At a time of disruptive change in the global order, DPG aims to deliver research based, relevant, reliable and realist policy perspectives to an actively engaged public, both at home and abroad. DPG is deeply committed to the growth of India's national power and purpose, the security and prosperity of the people of India and India's contributions to the global public good. We remain firmly anchored within these foundational principles which have defined DPG since its inception.

### DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

DPG Weekly World Watch is based on analysis of open source information. To subscribe please [click here](#).

Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Angana Guha Roy at [angana@dpg.org.in](mailto:angana@dpg.org.in).

© 2021 by the Delhi Policy Group

#### Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor,

India Habitat Centre,

Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003.

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)

## Contents

South Asia.....	1
East & South East Asia.....	8
Central & West Asia .....	8
United States .....	18
Europe & Russia .....	20
Africa & Latin America .....	23

## South Asia

### India

#### [EAM S Jaishankar delivers address at ASEAN-India Hackathon 2021](#)

February 5, 2021, Yahoo News

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar addressed ASEAN-India Hackathon grand finale on February 04 via video conferencing. EAM Jaishankar said that India identified cooperation in maritime domain as priority under ASEAN-India strategic partnership. "Development of coastal infrastructure, protection of marine ecosystems and providing sustained livelihoods to coastal communities are of topical interest to both ASEAN and India," he added.

#### [Took up killing of Tamil fishermen with Lanka in strongest terms: Jaishankar](#)

February 4, 2021, The Indian Express

India has taken up with Sri Lanka in the strongest terms the killing of Tamil Nadu fishermen, and has made it very clear that such incidents are unacceptable, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told Rajya Sabha.

#### [India ready to supply military equipment to IOR countries: Rajnath Singh](#)

February 5, 2021, The Indian Express

India is ready to supply military equipment, including missiles and tanks, to countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said. The statement comes at a time when India is trying to boost the domestic defence manufacturing industry. Also, Singh's comments come a day after he said India can be a "net security provider" in the IOR and is a "reliable partner" in the region.

#### [Aim To Achieve \\$25 Billion In Defence Production By 2025: Rajnath Singh](#)

February 5, 2021, NDTV

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that aerospace sector will play an important role to reach the targets of domestic defence production of USD 25 billion and exports of USD 5 billion by 2025.

#### [India would serve covid vaccine needs of Africa, PM Modi tells South African president Ramaphosa.](#)

February 5, 2021, DNA

Even as India's COVID-19 vaccine supplies reached South Africa, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured South African President Cyril Ramaphosa that India has the capacity to fulfill the needs of the African continent.

### [Rafael, BDL to jointly induct anti-torpedo defence system for Indian Navy](#)

February 4, 2021, The Economic Times

Israeli defence technology company Rafael Advanced Defence Systems and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) are teaming up for joint induction of an anti-torpedo defence system called 'SHADE' for the Indian Navy.

### [Tejas, Brahmos and Astra among 156 defence items cleared for exports](#)

February 4, 2021, India Today

India has cleared 156 defence equipment for exports including the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, artillery guns, battle tanks and missiles, anti-tank mines and explosives.

### [India-China standoff: China moved J-20 fighters the moment Rafales were stationed at LAC, says IAF chief Bhadauria](#)

February 4, 2021, WION

IAF chief Bhadauria asserted that talks were going on between Indian and Chinese commanders while stating that "lots of attention" was given to it amid the India-China standoff at LAC. India's air chief RKS Bhadauria said that the Indian Air Force (IAF) is fully prepared to face any situation along the Line of Actual Control(LAC) with China amid the standoff at the border

### [US offers conditional support to farm bills, says internet access hallmark of democracy](#)

February 4, 2021, Mint

The US seemed to give conditional support to India's newly passed farm laws that have triggered protests from farmers but added that unfettered access to information including the internet was one of the "hallmarks of a thriving democracy."

## **Pakistan**

### [Saudi Arabia, UAE retain \\$2b financial support](#)

February 4, 2021, The Express Tribune

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have not withdrawn their \$2 billion loans that matured last month, indicating a thaw in relations between Pakistan and the two key Gulf nations. This appeared to be a major development after the kingdom had already withdrawn \$2 billion out of \$3 billion loans that the oil-rich Gulf nation had extended in late 2018 to help Islamabad avoid default on international debt repayments.

### [Coal miners in Balochistan reluctant to work after Hazara killings](#)

February 4, 2021, The Express Tribune

Thousands of miners have stopped work and many have fled Baluchistan since terrorists killed 10 Hazara workers at a colliery last month. Labour organisations and government officials said up to 15,000 workers had downed tools since the murder of the Hazara group, forcing around 200 mines to close and slashing production.

### [PDM announces long march towards Islamabad on March 26](#)

February 4, 2021, The Express Tribune

The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) – an alliance of almost all major opposition parties – will begin its long march towards Islamabad by the end of next month in a bid to topple Prime Minister Imran Khan-led government.

### [China launches second frigate built for Pakistan](#)

January 31, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan Navy said that China has launched the second Type-054 frigate built for it. The launching ceremony of 2nd ship of Type-054 Class Frigate constructed for Pakistan Navy was held at Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard Shanghai, China.

### [Successful training launch of Ghaznavi missile conducted](#)

February 4, 2021, Dawn

The Pakistan Army Strategic Forces Command conducted the 'training launch' of nuclear-capable ballistic missile Ghaznavi as part of its annual field training exercise on January 3, 2021.

### [US alarmed at SC order to move Omar Sheikh to rest house](#)

February 4, 2021, Dawn

The United States said that it was "alarmed" by the Supreme Court's order to move Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, the prime accused in the 2002 Daniel Pearl slaying case, from his death cell at the Karachi Central Prison to a government rest house.

## **Afghanistan**

### [Pakistan OKs release of funds for projects in Afghanistan](#)

February 4, 2021, Pajhwok

Pakistan has announced according approval to the release Rs 549 million for two development projects in neighbouring Afghanistan. The approval was

given as part of the government's Afghanistan Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Programme. Out of the total grant, the government has approved the release of Rs61 million for the feasibility study for a new railway link from Peshawar to Jalalabad.

#### [U.S. should delay complete troop pullout in Afghanistan - report to Congress](#)

February 4, 2021, Reuters

The United States should extend the May 1 deadline for pulling all its troops from Afghanistan, and make force cuts contingent on progress in peace talks as well as by the Taliban in reducing violence and containing al Qaeda, according to the bipartisan report submitted to the US Congress.

#### [Pentagon: No Decision on 'Force Posture' in Afghanistan](#)

February 3, 2021, Tolo News

The Pentagon reiterated that any withdrawal from Afghanistan will be conditions-based. Pentagon's spokesman John Kirby in a question about a possible increase in the number of US forces in Afghanistan said that the US Defense Secretary is assessing all options, but said that the best solution to the conflict in Afghanistan is a political settlement of the conflict.

#### [Afghan drug smugglers arrested at Indian airport](#)

February 1, 2021, Pajhwok

The Indian Customs Department arrested two Afghan citizens and seized drugs worth \$1.5 million from them at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport. Two Afghan citizens, flying from Dubai, were arrested after they landed at the IGI airport. The Afghans were held with 208 capsules and 163 kilograms of heroin. The drugs are worth 114 million INR –equivalent to \$1.5 million.

#### [Japan Pledges \\$122.2M in Aid for Afghanistan](#)

February 1, 2021, Tolo News

Japan will provide \$122.2 million in aid to Afghanistan to support humanitarian and development programs in the country, Japan's Embassy in Kabul said in a statement.

#### [Pak-Army shellings on Kunar draw Karzai's ire](#)

February 3, 2021, Khaama Press

Kunar Provincial governor, Mohammad Iqbal Saeed told the media that Pakistani forces had fired 50 rockets at Suno village and Alamzo Dupe areas of the Shilton district since last night, causing heavy financial losses to the residents in the region. Meanwhile, the former Afghan president, Hamid Karzai reacted to the rocket attacks by Pakistani troops on Kunar, saying that Pakistan

should immediately stop their bombardment and instead of attacking Afghans, they have to work for a better bilateral relationship.

## **Bangladesh**

### [Aero India 2021: IAF Chief Holds Talks With Counterparts From Tajikistan, Bangladesh](#)

February 5, 2021, Business World

Indian Air Force (IAF) chief Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria met his counterparts from Tajikistan and Bangladesh and a delegation from France in separate meetings on the last day of Aero India 2021 in Bengaluru.

### [India, Bangladesh to hold Home Secretary level talks in March](#)

January 29, 2021, All India Radio

India and Bangladesh will hold the next Home Secretary Level talks, Commerce Secretary Level talks and the Secretary Level Meeting of Joint Rivers Commission before the March 2021 Summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh. The decision was taken during the Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) between the two countries which took place in Delhi .

### [Chinese vaccine trial in Dhaka fell through. Its state media blames New Delhi](#)

January 27, 2021, Hindustan Times

Chinese firm Sinovac Biotech told Bangladesh in September last year that it didn't have money to pay for the vaccine trials and its request for funding to CEPI had been declined.

### [Why is gas exploration stalled in Bangladesh?](#)

January 31, 2021, The Daily Star

Over the last 20 years, Bangladesh consumed about 13 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of gas. During the same period, only less than two TCF of new gas reserve was discovered. The number of exploration wells drilled during this time was merely 22, implying an average of about one well drilled per year. This is a prime example, by any standard, of a very underexplored country which has seen major gas discoveries in the past and has been rated highly for further gas prospects.



## Nepal

### [What's cooking in Nepal-China relations?](#)

February 1, 2021, The Kathmandu Post

It is estimated that about \$200 million worth of goods, in about 1,500 containers, imported by Nepali businessmen from or via China have been stranded across these two border points for the past year. Nepali businessmen have suffered a huge loss due to damage and rotting of goods, particularly the perishable ones. Although Nepali authorities unfailingly claim that they have communicated Nepal's concerns to Beijing, there have not been any changes on the ground. Instead, the traders reportedly protested against the Chinese highhandedness, which was highlighted in Indian media; the information was, conspicuously, missing in the mainstream Nepali press.

### [Nepal: Businessmen protest against China's block](#)

January 30, 2021, Big News Network

Nepali businessmen have launched a protest in the country's Rasuwa district against China's 'undeclared blockade' of cross-border trade.\

## Sri Lanka

### [A Sea Change: Chinese Hand Behind Sri Lanka Breaking Off ECT Pact at Colombo Port With India and Japan?](#)

February 4, 2021, News 18, 2021

Sri Lanka celebrated its 73rd Independence Day. The main event attended by the President and the Prime Minister took place in Colombo. The diplomats who were present were busy discussing Sri Lanka's recent U-turn on involving India and Japan in its much-hyped Eastern Container Terminal (ECT) project at the Colombo Port.

### [China on backfoot: Beijing attempts to force Sri Lanka to approve vaccine after Indian Covishield reach Colombo](#)

February 1, 2021, The Economic Times

China has allegedly pushed the Sri Lankan government to approve Covid-19 vaccines manufactured by Chinese state-owned firm Sinopharm, a development that comes close on the heels of India's gift of 500,000 doses of the locally manufactured Covishield jab to the island nation. It has decided to gift 300,000 doses of the vaccines to Sri Lanka, one of its key partners in the Belt and Road Initiative in the Indian Ocean Region.

[Indian Coast Guard Created A Maritime History By Averting A Major Ecological Disaster Off Sri Lanka Coast: Director General K. Natarajan](#)

January 30, 2021, Businessworld

India's frontier force, Indian Coast Guard is responsible for the surveillance of vast and vulnerable coastline over 7600Kms. And to cover the vast EEZ of 2.01 million sqKms and 4.6 Million SqKms of Indian Search and Rescue Regions which is more than the entire area of the land mass of the country, has stretched thin on ground both on assets and manpower. Director General, ICG, K. Natarajan spoke on Coastal Security. Click on the link.

## East & South East Asia

### China

#### [Ministry: China ready for dialogue on joining CPTPP](#)

February 5, 2021, China Daily

China is ready to enhance technical communication and exchanges with members of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership on issues regarding joining the pact, the Ministry of Commerce said.

#### [China to offer COVID-19 vaccines at fair, reasonable price: Chinese FM](#)

February 5, 2021, Global Times

China will offer the world its COVID-19 vaccines at fair, reasonable prices, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

#### [The world hopes to see healthy Sino-US relations](#)

February 5, 2021, China Daily

With the Joe Biden administration busy reversing the previous administration's policies, there is hope it would also reverse the regressive trend former president Donald Trump's set for China-US relations.

#### [China, Russia stress non-interference in countries' internal affairs](#)

February 4, 2021, Global Times

China and Russia said that the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, one of the basic norms governing international relations, should be upheld.

#### [PLA monitors US warship transiting in Taiwan Straits, opposes US using old tricks to disturb regional stability: spokesperson](#)

February 4, 2021, Global Times

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Eastern Theater Command said it tracked and monitored the movements of the USS John S. McCain guided-missile destroyer as it sailed through the Taiwan Straits and opposed the US repeating old tricks to deliberately create tensions and disturb regional peace and stability.

[Pakistani, Chinese navies play important roles in maintaining maritime order of Indian Ocean: Exclusive with Pakistan Navy chief](#)

February 4, 2021, Global Times

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy is scheduled to participate in the Multinational Exercise AMAN-2021 hosted by Pakistan in February as dozens of navies around the world are about to gather in Karachi.

[China conducts mid-course antiballistic missile test, system 'becomes more mature, reliable'](#)

February 4, 2021, Global Times

China successfully conducted a land-based, mid-course antiballistic missile (ABM) technical test in a move experts said showed China's mastery of the technology as the country's antiballistic missile system gradually matures and becomes more reliable.

US 'deeply disturbed' by reports of systematic rape in China's Xinjiang camps

The Guardian, February 04, 2021

The United States has said it is "deeply disturbed" and the UK government has come under further pressure to impose sanctions following reports of systematic rape and sexual torture of women detained in China's Xinjiang camps. A BBC report on Wednesday detailed allegations of rape, sexual abuse and torture of ethnic Uighur and other Muslim women, based on interviews with several former detainees and a guard. The interviewees told the BBC "they experienced or saw evidence of an organised system of mass rape, sexual abuse and torture".

[Beijing Won't Let America 'Compartmentalize' Climate Change](#)

The Wall Street Journal, February 03, 2021

President Biden is eager to make climate change a central issue, and he can expect an intense debate. The trade-offs are complicated and the politics are difficult and uncertain. But the biggest challenge may be international, particularly dealing with China, America's pre-eminent adversary. Does the Biden administration have the slightest idea how to reconcile its global environmental goals with its China strategy?

[China's Top Diplomat Warns Biden Against Meddling in Hong Kong, Xinjiang](#)

February 02, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

China's top diplomat warned the U.S. not to cross a "red line," in an attempt to steer a delicate bilateral relationship toward areas of cooperation as President Biden signals continuity with the previous administration on hot-button issues

including Hong Kong and Xinjiang. Yang Jiechi on Tuesday Beijing time emphasized the potential for a healthy U.S.-China relationship on public health, trade and climate, echoing recent language from leader Xi Jinping. But he left limited room for negotiation on issues such as human rights, the coronavirus response and what he called U.S. interference in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet and Xinjiang.

## Japan

### [Japan, Britain in sync on halting China's maritime advances](#)

February 4, 2021, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan and Britain agreed to strengthen cooperation to bring about a free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) region in a video conference between their respective foreign and defence ministers on Feb. 3.

### [Japan regrets Sri Lanka's scrapping of port terminal deal](#)

February 4, 2021, Japan Today

The Japanese Embassy said it regrets a decision by Sri Lanka's government to scrap a deal to develop a port terminal with Japan and India after weeks of protests by trade unions and opposition parties.

### [S Korea drops description of Japan as 'partner' in defense white paper](#)

February 3, 2021, Japan Today

South Korea's defence Ministry dropped its description of Japan as a "partner" in the latest defence white paper published, a move painted by local media as a "downgrade" that reflects worsening ties between the two countries.

### [EU vaccine curbs may delay Japan's inoculation drive](#)

February 2, 2021, Japan Today

European Union curbs on exports of novel coronavirus vaccines could delay Japan's inoculation drive, the minister in charge of the campaign said, while the government is expected to extend a state of emergency in a bid to rein in the epidemic.

### [Japan calls for nonviolent resolution to Myanmar coup](#)

February 1, 2021, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan is calling for a peaceful resolution to the dispute in Myanmar between civilian leaders and the military, acknowledging that the country's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and other top officials have been detained.

### [Japan pushes for 1-year extension with U.S. in host nation support](#)

January 31, 2021, The Asahi Shimbun

Japan has proposed a one-year extension on its current level of payment to host U.S. troops. Working-level negotiations on the initiative are set to begin as early as next week, according to Japanese government sources.

### [Japan and Britain affirm close security ties amid China's rise](#)

February 4, 2021, Japan Times

Japanese and British foreign and defence ministers agreed to strengthen security ties and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region as China becomes increasingly assertive in the East and South China seas.

## **Korea**

### [S. Korea, US agree to seek early conclusion of defense cost-sharing talks](#)

February 5, 2021, The Korea Herald

South Korea and the United States agreed to pursue an early conclusion of their defense cost-sharing talks to help strengthen their alliance and defence posture during their video talks, the foreign ministry said.

### [South Korea, Georgia sign air service agreement](#)

February 5, 2021, The Korea Times

South Korea and Georgia have signed an air services agreement that would lay the foundation for operations of direct flights traveling between the two countries, the foreign ministry said.

### [Inter-Korean ties, pandemic should be considered in planning joint military exercise: Foreign Minister nominee](#)

February 5, 2021, The Korea Times

Foreign Minister nominee Chung Eui-yong said that inter-Korean ties and the COVID-19 pandemic should be taken into account in planning this year's military exercises between South Korea and the United States, though he noted the need for a "proper" level of the drills.

### [Defence industry promotion law to take effect this week](#)

February 4, 2021, The Korea Herald

A newly legislated defense industry promotion law will go into effect this week, requiring the government to give priority to locally developed parts in the country's weapons systems, the arms procurement agency said.

### [Navy chief stresses need to secure light aircraft carrier for national interest](#)

February 4, 2021, The Korea Herald

The chief of South Korea's Navy called for securing a light aircraft carrier to boost the country's defense capabilities, saying it will be a key strategic asset to protect maritime sovereignty and national interest.

### [Korea, Cambodia strike free trade deal for broader economic cooperation](#)

February 3, 2021, The Korea Times

South Korea said it has clinched a free trade deal with Cambodia, the latest in a series of its free trade pacts to revitalize its ailing exports amid the new coronavirus pandemic.

### [Iran to Pay UN Dues with Money Frozen in Korea](#)

February 4, 2021, The Chosun Ilbo

Korea and Iran have agreed to pay Iran's UN dues with money frozen in Korea. Some US\$8 billion in Iranian oil earnings is frozen in Korean bank accounts under U.S. sanctions.

### [Most Korea-U.S. Defense Training Now Computer-Simulated](#)

January 29, 2021, The Chosun Ilbo

Most of the major combined South Korea-U.S. exercises have turned into computer-simulation training in the last three years. All three key joint drills -- Key Resolve, Foal Eagle and Ulchi-Freedom Guardian exercises -- were abolished in 2019 after U.S. President Donald Trump offered North Korean leader Kim Jong-un an unexpected gift at their first summit in Singapore.

## **Southeast Asia**

### [Indonesia, Malaysia Seeking ASEAN Meeting On Myanmar After Coup](#)

February 5, 2021, News 18

The leaders of Indonesia and Malaysia said they were seeking a special meeting of foreign ministers of Southeast Asian nations to discuss the situation in Myanmar, where an elected government was overthrown in a coup earlier this week.

### [Biden Calls On Myanmar Military To "Relinquish Power"](#)

February 5, 2021, NDTV

US President Joe Biden called on Myanmar's generals to "relinquish power" Thursday and demanded they free civilian leaders detained in this week's coup, as his administration said it was considering sanctions.

[Banging pots and pans, Myanmar people kick up protest against military takeover](#)

February 4, 2021, India Today

Banging pots and pans, Yangon residents have been protesting against the recent military takeover that ousted Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

[Closely monitoring developments in Myanmar, says India](#)

February 4, 2021, Hindustan Times

India said it was closely monitoring developments in Myanmar following the military coup that removed the government of Aung San Suu Kyi and was also taking up the issue as a member of the UN Security Council.

[Myanmar-China trade gates reopen, wait time now lesser despite COVID restrictions](#)

February 4, 2021, Eleven Myanmar

The Myanmar-China trade gates in the Muse 105 mile trade zone have reopened and are operating in cooperation with respective district and township administrations under COVID-19 guidelines.

[Int'l action should not escalate tensions in Myanmar: China on UNSC meet](#)

February 3, 2021, Business Standard

China said it was opposed to any strong resolution by the UN Security Council condemning the military coup in Myanmar and insisted that any action by the international community should not escalate the tensions and complicate matters.

[China building Indonesia into an EV powerhouse](#)

February 4, 2021, Asia Times

Chief investment minister Luhut Panjaitan has few concerns about China's iron grip on Indonesia's nickel industry as other major investors flock to a country with the range of mineral elements needed to turn it into one of the world's leading producers of lithium batteries and electric cars.

[In South China Sea, Philippines fights itself over Beijing's coastguard law](#)

February 2, 2021, SCMP

Philippine fishermen may have branded China's new coastguard law a "virtual declaration of war", but so far most of the fighting talk from Manila has been infighting.



## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [Russia and Turkey open joint military center in Azerbaijan](#)

February 2, 2021, Eurasia Net

Turkey and Russia have opened a joint military facility in Azerbaijan to help monitor the ceasefire with Armenia, a stark indicator of the shifting geopolitics in the region.

#### [High remittances erode poor countries' competitive advantage – new study](#)

February 4, 2021, Eurasia Net

Several countries Eurasianet covers are among the most remittance-dependent in the world, where millions of people elude poverty because they have a relative toiling abroad – usually Russia – who sends money. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are usually ranked in the top three, with remittances equivalent to about a third of GDP; Armenia, Georgia and Uzbekistan are not far behind.

#### [Kyrgyzstan: Constitution draft and Japarov decrees hint at authoritarian future](#)

February 4, 2021, Eurasia Net

Kyrgyzstan under President Sadyr Japarov is promising not just a return to strongman rule, but also the aggressive promotion of hazy notions of traditional values and patriotism.

#### [China and Central Asian states lead transnational repression – report](#)

February 4, 2021, Eurasia Net

China is the worst of the worst abusers among nations engaging in transnational repression, according to new rankings compiled by a prominent watchdog. All five Central Asian states, along with Russia and Azerbaijan, also made the list of 31 leading offenders.

#### [Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan sign roadmap for strategic railway](#)

February 4, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

Government delegations of Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan have signed a roadmap for the construction of a landmark rail link following trilateral talks in Tashkent, Xinhua news agency reported with reference to the Uzbek Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade.

### [Uzbekistan Foreign Ministry apologizes to Polish journalist who complained of sexual harassment](#)

February 3, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

Uzbekistan's Foreign Ministry has apologized to a Polish journalist who accused one of the ministry's officers of sexual harassment and pressuring her to write positive articles about the Central Asian nation in exchange for having her press accreditation prolonged.

### [Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan seek to expand cooperation on Caspian energy production](#)

February 1, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

As Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have resolved their decades-long dispute over a Caspian oil and gas field, Ashgabat now has an opportunity to diversify its hydrocarbon export destinations across the Caspian and through Azerbaijan to Europe.

### [Managing strategic competition: Kazakhstan's peacemaking initiatives](#)

January 4, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

In recent years, the security situation on the Eurasian continent has grown increasingly unstable. Great powers are less constrained by international norms and institutions, undermining peace and security from Crimea in the West to Xinjiang in the East. This poses a serious challenge to the states of Central Asia, caught in the centre of the continent. Some, and particularly Kazakhstan, have responded by growing international activism – not least by contributing to the management and resolution of the conflicts and controversies that could affect their security. That makes these states natural partners for the United States and Europe.

## **West Asia**

### [Biden Ends US support for Saudi Arabia's War in Yemen](#)

February 04, 2021, Middle East Eye

US President Joe Biden announced the end of US support for a Saudi-led coalition that is waging war in Yemen, in a major policy reversal from the previous administration that may alter the course of the conflict.

### [PM Modi Thanks Bahrain's Crown Prince for Partnering to Fight Covid-19](#)

January 30, 2021, Mint

Prime Minister Narendra Modi thanked Bahrain's crown prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad for their partnership in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

### [Iran, India Enjoy Great Potential for Closer Military Cooperation: Hatami](#)

February 04, 2021, Press TV

Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami says the Islamic Republic and India enjoy great capacities to promote defense and military ties given the many commonalities that the two states share, including their position on various international issues.

### [India Looks to Continue Chabahar Port Development; Industry Awaits More Clarity on US Sanctions on Iran](#)

February 03, 2021, Mint

Indian Industry representatives added that they will wait for clear signs that US President Joe Biden is ready to re-engage Iran and willing to remove all sanctions on entities doing business with Tehran. The lifting of embargos by Washington on oil trade, they say, is the litmus test that will indicate a restoration of predictability in US-Iran ties.

### [US 'disappointed' as UN International Court of Justice Takes up Iran Sanctions](#)

February 04, 2021, AL Arabiya

The US said it was "disappointed" by the top UN court's ruling that it can take up Iran's bid to overturn US sanctions reimposed by Donald Trump. State Department spokesman Ned Price said: "We are disappointed that the court did not accept our well-founded legal arguments that the case Iran brought is outside the court's jurisdiction."

### [Iran Installs Advanced Centrifuges in Natanz and Fordow Facilities](#)

February 02, 2021, Tehran Times

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, has declared Iran will accelerate its nuclear program by operating more advanced centrifuges.

### [Israel's Top Business Chamber Bats for FTA with India](#)

February 05, 2021, WION

Israel's top business chamber, the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce (FICC) has extended strong support to a free trade agreement (FTA) with India.

### [Egypt Considers Purchase of Indian Missile System](#)

February 04, 2021, AL-Monitor

India may supply Egypt with its BrahMos missile systems as part of New Delhi's efforts to emerge as a major arms exporter and Cairo's push to diversify its weaponry

### [Bangladesh Bought Mass Spying Equipment from Israeli Company](#)

February 02, 2021, AL Jazeera

Documents and statements obtained by Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit show that the Bangladesh army purchased the Israeli equipment in 2018 using a Bangkok-based middleman and Bangladeshi military intelligence officers were trained in Hungary by Israeli intelligence experts.

## United States

### United States

['America is back' - Biden touts muscular foreign policy in first diplomatic speech](#)

February 5, 2021, Reuters

S. President Joe Biden promised a new era after the scattershot foreign policy of his predecessor, Donald Trump, declaring "America is back" on the global stage in his first diplomatic address as president.

[Biden Issues Warnings on Crises in Myanmar, Russia](#)

February 4, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

Mr. Biden called on military leaders in Myanmar to relinquish power, release detainees and lift a telecommunications blackout, and said that he was prepared to "impose consequences on those responsible."

[U.S. will take on challenges posed by China directly: Biden](#)

February 5, 2021, The Hindu

The United States will take on the challenges being posed by China directly, but will not hesitate to work with Beijing when it is in America's interest to do so, President Joe Biden said.

[India-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' to be held in Rajasthan from 8-21 February](#)

February 3, 2021, The Print

The exercise near the India-Pakistan border aims at enhancing cooperation and interoperability between the two armies and will focus on counter-terrorism operations under the United Nations mandate, the spokesperson said.

[India-U.S. fully committed to further strengthening ties: India's envoy](#)

February 4, 2021, The Hindu

India and the U.S. both are fully committed to further strengthening their strategic bilateral ties to the next level and the recent conversations between the top officials of the two countries have been very warm and forward looking, India's top diplomat here has said.

### [Indo-US ties go beyond trade: Top US official](#)

February 2, 2021, The Times of India

Don Heflin, US Chargé d’Affaires, said that the Indo-US defence partnership goes beyond trade and said the country was committed to further ties to achieve common interests and goals of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).

### [U.S. Senate Democrats push ahead on road to new COVID-19 relief](#)

February 4, 2021, Reuters

The U.S. Senate, in the throes of a marathon debate over the shape of President Joe Biden’s \$1.9 trillion coronavirus aid plan, voted overwhelmingly on Thursday to exclude upper-income Americans from a new round of direct payments to help stimulate the economy.

### [Elevating ‘deterrence by denial’ in US defense strategy](#)

February 4, 2021, Atlantic Council

Protecting US security and advancing US interests in an increasingly multipolar world—one defined by both rising and revanchist powers—now form the crux of what national-security commentators call “great-power competition.”

### [FMS route unmatched procurement mode for India to acquire F-15EX fighter jet, says US](#)

February 2, 2021, Mint

Days after US aerospace giant Boeing said that it had received the go-ahead from the US government to offer its F-15EX fighter jet to the Indian air force, a senior American official said the government-to-government Foreign Military Sales (FMS) route offered a unique opportunity to India to acquire cutting edge US technology unmatched by any other procurement mode.

### [China says U.S. ‘creating tensions’ after warship sails near Taiwan](#)

February 5, 2021, Reuters

The United States is deliberately “creating tensions” and disrupting peace and stability, China’s military said, after a U.S. warship sailed through the sensitive Taiwan Strait, the first such mission under the new Biden administration.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [Macron supports U.S.-Iran dialogue, floats himself as 'honest broker'](#)

February 4, 2021, Reuters

French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed the renewed U.S. willingness to engage with Iran, offered himself as an honest broker and said Saudi Arabia and Israel must ultimately be involved somehow.

#### [Lavrov, Borrell to hold talks in Moscow](#)

February 5, 2020, TASS

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will meet with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, who is in Moscow on February 4-6. This is the first visit of Chief of EU diplomacy since 2017.

#### [Johnson Wins Vaccine Spat with E.U., but a Struggle Over Northern Ireland Looms](#)

February 4, 2021, The New York Times

The European Union's ham-handed threats over coronavirus vaccine exports have put Prime Minister Boris Johnson in an unaccustomed place this week: standing on the moral high ground in a dispute with Brussels.

#### [France's push for the Rafale](#)

February 3, 2021, Airforce Technology

On 25 January, France and Greece finalised the purchase of 18 Rafale fighters for the Hellenic Air Force in a €2.5bn contract, marking the first European export of Dassault's Rafale.

#### [Biden Freezes Trump's Withdrawal of 12,000 Troops From Germany](#)

February 4, 2021, The New York Times

The move halts a Trump administration decision to shift some units to Belgium and Italy and bring others home, a plan that had rankled European leaders and angered lawmakers in both parties.

#### [Blinken discusses U.S. detainees, Navalny and arms control with Russia's Lavrov](#)

February 5, 2021, Reuters

The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called for the release of Americans detained in Russia during a call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

that also encompassed nuclear arms control and China, a State Department spokesman said.

### [Britain condemns detention of Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi](#)

February 4, 2021, Reuters

Britain condemns the detention of ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other elected officials, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said.

## **Russia**

### [Kremlin dismisses Biden's demand to release Navalny as aggressive rhetoric](#)

February 5, 2021, TASS

The demand of US President Joe Biden to release blogger Alexey Navalny comes down to "aggressive and unconstructive rhetoric," Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated.

### [Lavrov says 'lack of normality' is the main issue in Russia-EU ties](#)

February 5, 2021, TASS

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has branded the 'lack of normality' as the key problem in the relations between Russia and the European Union.

### [Lavrov, Blinken welcome prolongation of New START](#)

February 5, 2021, TASS

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken have welcomed the prolongation of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) during a phone call, noting its role in ensuring international security.

### [Russia expects UNESCO mission to visit Nagorno-Karabakh soon](#)

February 4, 2021, TASS

Russia expects UNESCO's preliminary mission to visit Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjacent area of Azerbaijan in the near future, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

### [Sanctions cannot disrupt our special and strategic partnership with India: Russia](#)

February 4, 2021, The Economic Times

A day after the threat of sanctions against India for going ahead with the S 400 air defence system purchase re-surfaced, Russia has said that no coercive action can disrupt the 'special and strategic' partnership and both nations have made it clear that they are going ahead with weapon deliveries.



### [Russia, India sign eight memoranda at military-industrial conference in Bangalore](#)

February 4, 2021, TASS

Russian and Indian companies have signed eight memoranda on mutual understanding at a military-industrial conference that took place in Bangalore, Russian trade representative in India Alexander Rybas told Russian journalists on the sidelines of the event which was held within the framework of the Aero India 2021 exhibit.

### [Ukraine Sanctions 'Russian Trojan Horse' Media Assets Associated With Putin Friend](#)

February 3, 2021, RFERL.org

Ukraine has sanctioned the media assets connected to a political heavyweight with close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin in Kyiv's latest move against pro-Kremlin figures inside the country.

### [Eurocrats Are from Pluto](#)

February 01, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

Sooner or later every new presidential administration experiences that sinking feeling that one of its big ideas may not be working well. For Team Biden, that moment arrived last week as Germany, with widespread support in the European Union, made clear that Europe has no real interest in countering either Russia or China. Warning against the "building of blocs," Chancellor Angela Merkel told her virtual audience at the World Economic Forum that she thought Europe should not join with either the U.S. or China against the other.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [Brazil Aims To Buy 30 Million COVID-19 Vaccine Doses From Russia, India](#)

February 4, 2021, NDTV

The Brazilian government announced it was negotiating the purchase of 30 million coronavirus vaccine doses from Russia and India, after regulators made it easier for the treatments to win emergency-use authorizations.

#### [Lacalle Pou agreed with Bolsonaro in Brasilia to make Mercosur more flexible](#)

February 4, 2021, Merco Press

The President of Uruguay, Luis Lacalle Pou, traveled overseas for the first time to meet with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, in a meeting in which they discussed the idea of "making Mercosur more flexible" and the possibility of a face-to-face summit with the leaders of Argentina and Paraguay at the end of March.

#### [Russia has offered Argentina fighter aircraft and training jets, defense website reports](#)

February 4, 2021, Merco Press

Russia has again approached the Argentine government to offer defense equipment, including military planes for the air force.

#### [Argentine president asks Putin to guarantee supply of the Sputnik V vaccine](#)

February 4, 2021, Merco Press

Supply of the Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine and the possible elaboration of the shots in Argentina were among the issues addressed by Argentine president Alberto Fernandez and Russia's Vladimir Putin during a phone conference.

#### [Argentina's state-run shale driller faces debt deadline](#)

February 3, 2021, World Oil.com

Creditors of Argentina's state-run oil company, YPF SA, are sending mixed signals as one group of bondholders rejected the company's latest debt restructuring plan while another voiced support.

#### [Chile delays opening of bids for US\\$300mn hospital PPP](#)

February 4, 2021, Bnamericas.com

Chile's public works ministry (MOP) has pushed back the date to open bids for the Biobío health network PPP from February 4 to March 17 for the technical

offers and from February 26 to April 5 for the economic bids, according to documents from the finance ministry's concessions department.

### [Cuba's imports from China slump 40% in 2020, extending long decline](#)

February 5, 2021, Reuters

Cuba's imports from China tumbled to \$483 million last year versus \$791 million in 2019, according to data from the Chinese Customs Office, extending a steep five-year decline as the island's economy reels from U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic.

### [Cuba reaffirms its commitment to nuclear disarmament](#)

February 4, 2021, Prensa Latina

Cuba reaffirmed its commitment to nuclear disarmament by signing the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). According to the Cuban Foreign Ministry's website, the country's ratification expresses its support for the complete and effective prohibition of all explosive tests, other sophisticated methods and subcritical trials.

### [Mexico stops accepting US returns of some migrant families under pandemic-era policy](#)

February 4, 2021, CNN

The United States has been unable to return some migrant families to Mexico under a pandemic-era border policy after a change in Mexican law concerning the detention of children, according to three Department of Homeland Security officials.

### [Hundreds of Chinese ships continue to plunder South America's fish stocks](#)

February 4, 2021, Asia News

A "floating city" of hundreds of mostly Chinese-flagged vessels, looking for squid and other species off the coasts of the Caribbean and South America, is now approaching Argentina's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

### [Latin America swings toward EU camp on Venezuela](#)

February 2, 2021, Argus

Chile and the Dominican Republic are the latest Latin American countries to join the EU-led International Contact Group (ICG) on Venezuela, a move that highlights Latin America's growing distance from US sanctions-based policy.

## Africa

### [A Dictator in the DRC?](#)

February 5, 2021, Africa News

A group of pro-Joseph Kabila senators in the Democratic Republic of Congo denounced a perceived "dictatorial shift" in the country. Their indignation comes after President Félix Tshisekedi, who took office in January 2019, made a series of top-level changes in parliament where a majority of deputies have switched to his corner after a two-year power struggle with pro-Kabila supporters.

### [Madagascar: Thousands Migrate North to Escape Hunger and Drought](#)

February 3, 2021, Africa News

The World Bank and the United States donated \$200 million to Madagascar to fight hunger in the south – from where thousands of Malagasy locals are also fleeing drought.

### [Scepticism as COVID vaccination campaigns begin across Africa](#)

February 5, 2021, Africa News

Conspiracy theories, mistrust and patchy communication have contributed to a flourishing of scepticism about Covid-19 vaccines in African countries, experts say, posing potential dangers to future immunisation campaigns.

### [Somalia leaders in emergency talks over election crisis](#)

January 3, 2021, Africa News

Mogadishu has convened an urgent 3-day meeting with federal state leaders in a bid to break an election deadlock and avoid a constitutional crisis.

### [Tanzania minister: No interest in procuring COVID -19 vaccines](#)

February 3, 2021, Africa News

Tanzania's health ministry says it has no plans in place to accept COVID-19 vaccines, just days after the president of the country of 60 million people expressed doubt about the vaccines without offering evidence.

### [Nigerians in Maiduguri without power for a week after jihadist attack](#)

February 2, 2021, Africa News

Locals in Nigeria's northeastern city of Maiduguri have been without power for a week after jihadists blew up supply lines from the national electricity grid.

### [In the CAR, France and Russia engage in a mini Cold War](#)

February 5, 2021, The Africa Report

The Central African Republic has become another playground for the war of influence between Paris and Moscow. The latest episode to date: the alleged infiltration of a French defence subcontractor by Russian intelligence.

### [Ethiopia, Somalia, Zambia: Elections to watch in 2021](#)

February 4, 2021, The Africa Report

Elections for new presidents and prime ministers give populations a chance to think about where their countries are heading. The Covid-19 crisis has been weakening economies across the continent, setting the scene for some hotly contested polls in 2021.

### [Chad : 1st country in Covid era to ask for restructuring of its debt](#)

February 3, 2021, The Africa Report

Already one of the beneficiaries of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), Chad has just officially requested debt restructuring from its major public creditors as well as a support agreement with the IMF.



**DPG**

**Delhi Policy Group**  
Core 5A, 1st Floor,  
India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road  
New Delhi - 110003  
India  
[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)